

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Hanaford School

200 Middle Road

East Greenwich, RI 02818

ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA MAY BE SUBJECT TO A VOTE

6:00 p.m. Mr. Green made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Winters to go into Executive Session under RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) Potential Litigation- SORICO, Fields' Litigation, Update on Lamendola Litigation and 42-66-5(a) (1) (2) Discussion of request under Article 12.3 of the Support Professionals Contract

7:08 p.m. Mr. Durant made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer to go out of Executive Session at 7:08p.m. The motion passed unanimously (7-0). Mr. Durant then made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Records to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Meeting reconvened in Open Session at 7:11p.m.

The regular session of the East Greenwich School Committee was called order in the Hanaford School Cafeteria at 7:11p.m. by Chair, Dr. Deidre Gifford. Those in attendance were: Mr. Robert Durant, Vice

Chair; Mrs. Susan Records, Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters, Mr. Paul Martin, Mr. David Green, and Mr. Jack Sommer

Dr. Gifford announced there was one vote taken in executive session in regards to fields' litigation and the vote was unanimously approved (7-0).

Regular Meeting

I. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. Public Comments

There were no comments.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular for 3/1/11 and 3/8/11

b. Joint meeting of Building Committee and School Committee 1/11/11

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Regular minutes for 3/1/11, 3/8/11, and the Joint meeting of Building Committee and School Committee 1/11/11 were unanimously approved with Mr. Martin abstaining (6-0).

IV. Recognitions

Recognitions were made as follows:

a. Cole – Gold Key Award- Regional winner-Scholastic Art & Writing Award-Aaron Gaudette

b. Cole-Spelling Bee Winner-Kourtney Clements

c. Cole- Wei Li- Second Place Winner, R.I., MATHCOUNTS

d. Cole- Debra McMullen-Alice Sullivan R.I. Interscholastic Female Coach of the Year -2010

V. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Mercurio noted the NEASC team will be here on Sunday, April 10, 2011. There will be a public reception from 4:00-4:45 in the EGHS library. School Committee members are scheduled to meet with the NEASC team at 2:20p.m. School Committee members will also meet with the team to hear the closing remarks on Wednesday, April 13, 2011. Dr. Mercurio will email a schedule to Committee members. An executive session is scheduled for April 13, 2011 at 6:00p.m. to interview a candidate for the EGHS principal position.

VI. Action Items

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mr. Martin, the Committee unanimously approved (7-0) the following field trips:

a. Approval of Field Trip- Costa Rica, April 11-April 21, 2012, EGHS

Mr. Martin questioned the ratio of students to teachers on the Costa Rica trip. Mr. Mackenzie stated that he needs to finalize the chaperones.

b. Approval of Field Trip-Mystic Aquarium, June 3, 2011, Grade 2 Meadowbrook

c. Approval of Field Trip-Peabody Essex Museum, Boston, April 15, 2011-Cole, Gr.8

d. Approval of Field Trip-Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, April 29, 2011-EGHS

e. Approval of Field Trip-Boston Freedom Trail, May 23, 2011, Eldredge, Gr.5

f. Approval of School Calendar 2011-2012

On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mr. Durant the calendar was approved. Before the motion was approved by the entire Committee, Mr. Martin withdrew his motion. There was discussion about Senior Exhibition on April 25, 2012 and whether Cole students would be dismissed early to allow Cole teachers the opportunity to judge the projects. This item needs to be discussed further and was not part of the vote. On a new motion by Mr. Green, which was seconded by Mr. Durant, the 2011-2012 calendar was unanimously approved (7-0) with the exception of approving early dismissal for Cole for Senior Project. Mrs. Dillon cautioned the Committee in regards to removing any PD days due to extensive work that needs to be done regarding alignment with the common core. Mr. Martin noted he would like the Committee to look at increasing the school year by two days.

g. Approval of home schooling, parental leave, retirements, and appointments

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mrs. Records, the following home school approval, parental leave extension, appointments, and retirements were unanimously approved by the School Committee (7-0).

- 1. Home School Approval – grade 10 student**
- 2. Parental leave extension-Ellen Garcia, Frenchtown**
- 3. Retirement- Kathy Palmeiro, Cole**
- 4. Retirement-Barbara Bentsen, Meadowbrook**
- 5. Retirement-Denise Merrill, Frenchtown**

6. Retirement-Constance Zack, Cole

7. Appointment- Dr. Areglado to Building Committee

8. Appointment- James Westell, Cole Middle School Intramural Wrestling Coach

9. Appointment-Scott Douglas, EGHS Girls' Soccer Coach

h. Fund Balance

Dr. Mercurio recommends \$300,000.00 be reserved for capital maintenance projects. RIDE reimburses the district 40% and it is believed that these funds go directly into a town account. Dr. Mercurio and Mrs. Crawford will check to see if there is a policy regarding fund balance and reimbursement. Mr. Green would like the Committee to look at establishing a fund balance account for technology maintenance. On an initial motion by Mr. Durant and seconded by Mrs. Winters, the fund balance was seconded and then the motion was withdrawn by Mr. Durant. He would like clarification as to where the funds go before a vote can be taken.

i. Binding Arbitration Resolution

Dr. Gifford discussed the legislation being considered by the General Assembly requiring binding arbitration. Current law does not provide for mandatory arbitration. There is strong opposition from RIASC to consider opposing binding arbitration because it takes control from the local municipality and gives the authority to an arbitrator. On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mr. Green, the Committee voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the School Committee Resolution to oppose binding arbitration. This resolution will be sent to other Rhode Island Municipalities, School Committees statewide,

State Senator, State Representative, and the Governor.

j. Approval of bid- Dell Kace Network Management Solution

Dr. Mercurio discussed the bid which includes remote management which will decrease time spent by technicians driving to schools to fix computers and software. This technology was recommended by the technology advisory committee. Mr. Green asked about the annual maintenance fee and it was unclear whether that cost is included in the bid. This bid will be funded through the FY2011 budget. The Committee would like clarity regarding warranty and maintenance costs before approving the bid. The item was tabled until the April 26, 2011 meeting.

k. Approval of bid-Technology Use in a Blended Learning Environment

Mrs. Dillon discussed the bid which looks at inventive ways to integrate technology. This bid is ARRA grant-funded for students with IEPs. These funds need to be spent by September 30, 2011. There is a three-year warranty and the technology will be refreshed using district level funds. The purchase of I-Pads and I-MACS will eliminate various assistive tech equipment. The new computer carts have remote access with a wireless hub which will kick in when district access is unavailable. Mrs. Dillon noted classroom teachers have no involvement except ensuring the appropriate APP is on the unit. Special Education staff members will load the APPS. On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the bid was unanimously approved (7-0).

l. Approval of bid-School World Web Hosting and Design Service

Dr. Mercurio discussed the bid and noted it is for seven sites including all schools and central administration. The Committee had several questions regarding the warranty, hosting cost, and maintenance. More information is needed before the Committee can approve the bid. This item was tabled until the April 26, 2011 meeting.

VII. Discussion Items

a. Change of venue for School Committee meetings

Mr. Martin suggested School Committee meetings be held at least once a year in each school and suggests the next three meetings take place at Frenchtown, Meadowbrook, and Eldredge. There was discussion whether it is best to keep meetings at one location for consistency. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled in the new Cole library on April 26, 2011. Dr. Gifford noted if this space is not acceptable another location will be reviewed.

b. School Committee Scholarship \$2000

Mr. Martin discussed the School Committee Scholarship which was initiated to support students who plan to attend a state school and have a financial need. Last year, two \$1000.00 scholarships were awarded. This year, Mr. Martin hopes to award a \$1000.00 scholarship. He will be send letters to current and previous School Committee members who have served four years on the Committee asking for their support.

c. ESCO

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Committee voted (7-0) to table this item until the April 26, 2011

meeting. Mr. Durant, Mr. Sommer, and Mr. Wilmarth will present a report on ESCO.

d. Middle School Transition

Mrs. Meyer said the transition is going well and complemented the entire Cole staff, SBS, and PTG parents. She added that teams are going above and beyond packing and a meeting is scheduled with the movers tomorrow. The library will be moved on April 8, 2011. Plans have been confirmed with Aramark for a cook-out on April 15th. Technology placement and deployment was finalized yesterday. A parent meeting is scheduled for April 7th to discuss the traffic pattern. Mrs. Meyer gave the Committee a copy of the Cole Transition FAQ (frequently asked question) sheet. Mr. Martin asked questions regarding fire drills. Mrs. Meyer noted there will be eight mock drills with one planned for the first day and a real drill the second day. All fire exits are posted and the instructions are being drafted.

e. Aramark

Mrs. Stoehr discussed the March figures and noted that meal counts are up. She is anticipating further increases with the opening of Cole.

Year-to-date meal counts are up even though there are two less service days than last year. Marketing efforts are helping to communicate the wellness program promoting fruits and vegetables.

The operating statement projects a break-even return at the end of the school year. Dr. Gifford thanked Mrs. Stoehr for her hard work with the wellness program.

f. Independent Accountant's Report on applying Agreed-Upon Procedures-UCOA

Mrs. Crawford discussed the report and noted there were minimal findings. One item was a transaction charged to an incorrect account. On March 25, 2011, the UCOA information was made available online to the public.

g. Building Committee Recommendations

Mr. Gowell, Chair of the Building Committee stated the Building Committee met and discussed the priority of remaining RIDE-approved projects. The top priority item is the Meadowbrook floor and roof. The next priority is the EGHS library. The Building Committee recommends the following items not be considered: installing a wall in the Meadowbrook cafeteria, new entryway and administration reconfiguration at Hanaford, demolition of the Frenchtown portable classroom, and the Eldredge reconfiguration of classrooms. On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mr. Durant, the Committee unanimously voted (7-0) to approve the Building Committee's recommendation to no longer consider the above listed items.

Mr. Gowell discussed the meetings that have taken place and reiterated the SGH forensic consultant confirmed the floor is failing due to water and the air. The solution is to remove all of the flooring system above the slab and replace with a new system and stabilize the negative pressure that allows moisture to condense on the floor. At the joint meeting between the School Committee and Building Committee, the School Committee asked for a less expensive solution and authorized SMMA to study and determine if there is an

alternative solution. At the last Building Committee meeting, SMMA presented their findings noting there is not a cheaper solution. The Building Committee unanimously approved a full fix of Meadowbrook again after hearing the SMMA findings. Mr. Gowell is not recommending funds be used at this time to install a roof-mounted HVAC system.

The Building Committee recommends a complete repair of the floor and roof at Meadowbrook and a replacement of uni-ventilators with digital controls to balance the air. \$1.6 million was originally approved for Meadowbrook. \$3.4 million is needed for the floor and roof replacement. On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mrs. Records, the Committee unanimously (7-0) approved the full fix of Meadowbrook using the \$1.6 million that was initially approved by RIDE and supplementing with \$1.8 million for a total of \$3.4 million approved to fix the roof and floor at Meadowbrook.

The Building Committee's second recommendation is to improve the EGHS library. The cost could be from \$500,000 to \$2 million. The Building Committee would like the School Committee to authorize a fixed fee of approximately \$15,000 to do a full design of the EGHS library and then come back with recommendations. The School Committee can then choose recommendations from an ala carte menu.

Mr. Sommer questioned the useful life of a building. Mr. Ed Frenette, SMMA, said the rule of thumb is to buy a building every 50 years.

Different parts of a building run out of their usefulness at different times depending on when improvements are made. The key is to maintain the building and make the appropriate fixes. Mr. Frenette gave an overview of the recommended library renovations which include opening up the back wall, installing glass, and removing the office and staircase. An outside space can also be created for classes or theatre. Mr. Frenette noted the improvements can be done on an incremental basis. Dr. Gifford discussed her conversations with EGHS students about the library. Many mentioned they can never get in the library either due to it being closed or because a class is using it. There appears to be rules and restrictions regarding library use that need to be clarified for the Committee. Mr. Martin discussed the library operating hours noting the library assistant position was cut a few years ago. He added that perhaps the librarian's hours can be adjusted to allow students access after school. Dr. Gifford stated the School Committee needs a better understanding of the library accessibility before a vote can be taken.

h. Fields' Memo of Understanding

Dr. Mercurio gave the Committee a copy of the Town Manager's memo addressing the Fields' MOU. After a follow-up meeting with Mr. Sequino and input from DEM, Dr. Mercurio will report back to the Committee. Dr. Gifford would like to see the latest copy of the MOU at the next School Committee meeting.

i. Budget FY2012

The district has the final number of retirements and can make adjustments now. The town has requested a \$400,000 cut in the

School Committee's proposed budget. Mr. Durant noted the Committee needs to look outside the classroom noting contractual increases and pensions amount to approximately \$900,000. \$200,000 needs to be cut from that figure. Dr. Mercurio and Mrs. Crawford will revisit the budget for possible suggestions and bring recommendations to the Committee on April 26th. Dr. Gifford noted schools have been level funded for the past two years and is unsure of the methodology used by the town in decreasing the school's budget. Mr. Green agreed and does not want cuts to affect the programmatic offerings in the East Greenwich Schools. He noted we need to add to the value of the school system, not decrease the value.

VIII. School Committee Concerns

All School Committee members need to fill out and submit their Ethics Commission form by April 29, 2011.

IX. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Records, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Committee voted (7-0) to adjourn at 9:44 pm.

**CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO
SECRETARY**